United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1533
2 December 1993

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General, addressing High-level Panel on African Development, says long-term development cannot be achieved amid instability and conflict; stresses need for broad-based regional cooperation in economic and political spheres.

+ Stating that "time is running out", participants in Addis Ababa Meeting on Humanitarian Assistance for Somalia sign Declaration of intent with view to establishing six-month plan of action by year's end.

+ United States tells Fifth Committee that overall proposed programme budget for biennium 1994-1995 is too high; proposes operational cuts amounting to $100 million.

+ Secretary-General to separate functions of Special Representative for former Yugoslavia and Co-Chairman of International Conference; Yasushi Akashi to be new Special Representative, Thorvald Stoltenberg to remain Co-Chairman.

+ Israel tells General Assembly that summit between Syrian President and Israeli Prime Minister would aid Middle East peace process; seeks comprehensive peace, with separate treaties with all Arab and Muslim countries; Egypt cites Camp David Accords as example to follow.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today told the Panel of High-level Personalities on African Development that there was a growing awareness that the continent's problems required global attention. However, drawing attention to those problems did not by itself produce solutions. Words still had to be transformed into action. Africa's recent history had clearly shown that peace, stability and security were prerequisites for development. Time and again, unrest and conflict had destroyed in a few months progress that had taken years to achieve.

Political conflict in Somalia had cost hundreds of thousands of lives, destroyed infrastructure and wiped out productive capacity, the

(more)

For information media--not an official record

Secretary-General continued. Elsewhere on the continent, instability discouraged investment and unrest deterred assistance. Long-term development could not be achieved in such an atmosphere. Instead, a stable modus vivendi had to be found for each society. He stressed the importance of broad-based regional cooperation and integration in the economic and political spheres. Excessive spending on defence must be tackled, and greater emphasis placed on more productive sectors of society. Political will alone could not guarantee results. International assistance was needed in dealing with such matters as access to markets, debt relief and technology transfer.

The Panel of High-level Personalities, which was appointed by the Secretary-General in December 1992 to advise him on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, will conclude its two-day meeting tomorrow.

* * *

The Fourth Coordination Meeting on Humanitarian Assistance for Somalia concluded yesterday in Addis Ababa with the signing of a Declaration of goals and principles to be translated into a six-month plan of action before the end of the year. Participants agreed that "time is running out", both in terms of the endurance of the Somali people in their search for sustainable solutions to their desperate situation, and in terms of international patience and funding. The way forward had to be determined by the Somali people themselves, with recognition that assistance would be directed to those areas where stability and security had been attained, and where the involvement of elders, local non-governmental organizations and representatives of the international community was allowed.

In order to move forward effectively, the participants agreed to a division of responsibilities between the Somali people, the donor community, the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), United Nations agencies and programmes and NGOs. They committed themselves to work under the guidance of the Development Council, a body composed of representatives of the various Somali Regional Development Committees, to produce sectoral strategies consistent with long-term sustainable development.

* * *

The representative of the United States told the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) today that the overall proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 was too high. Member States had set a budget outline that established an overall resource level of $2.702 billion for the biennium. The budget submitted by the Secretary-General was $47 million higher, which was unacceptable. He proposed operational cuts in such areas as expenses for office furniture, publications, maintenance and travel costs, in order to trim $100 million from the overall budget.

However, the United States representative went on to say, allocations for specific programmes such as peace-keeping, humanitarian assistance, the environment and human rights, were insufficient. He called on the Assembly to

(more)

support a budget that would energize the United Nations human rights programme, and said the imbalance between peace-keeping needs and capabilities should be redressed.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has decided to separate the function of Special Representative for the former Yugoslavia from that of Co-Chairman of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, a United Nations spokesman said today. Both of those functions are currently fulfilled by Thorvald Stoltenberg. Mr. Stoltenberg will remain Co-Chairman of the International Conference, while Yasushi Akashi, formerly Special Representative for Cambodia, will be the new Special Representative for the former Yugoslavia and Chief of Mission of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR).

* * *

Israel told the General Assembly yesterday that the Middle East peace process would be greatly helped by a summit in Damascus or Jerusalem between President Assad of Syria and Prime Minister Rabin of Israel. "Let us create another psychological and political breakthrough, as Egyptian President Sadat did when he came to Jerusalem in November 1977," the Israeli representative told the Assembly as it began its consideration of the situation in the Middle East. He called on King Hussein of Jordan to sign a peace treaty with Israel and said Israel wanted a comprehensive peace, based on separate treaties with the Gulf and North African States, and all other Arab and Muslim countries.

Egypt said the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel remained a historic moment in the Middle East peace process, as well as an example for others to follow. If that pioneering experiment had not succeeded, subsequent experiments would not have succeeded either. As a result of its own experiences in the peace process, Egypt supported the bilateral and multilateral negotiations.

Saudi Arabia said peace in the Middle East required a solution of the question of Jerusalem. A recent decision of the Israeli Supreme Court stating that any ruling changing the status of the holy city would be considered null and void, was a blatant violation of Security Council resolutions. Israel must show its good will by building confidence, and the question of settlements must also be addressed, according to Saudi Arabia.

The representative of Jordan said that despite possible setbacks, "we are on the right track, that the long-standing struggle of the Palestinian people has started to bear fruit, that the parties involved in the peace process remain committed to their peace obligation, and that they have agreed to inscribe all those issues in the agenda for negotiations".

* *** *